

VPSCG – Regional Choice Initiative

Principals Meeting

Agenda

January 5, 2011

Prepared by: Marianne LeDonne, RCI Director

8:30AM – 9:00AM

Breakfast

9:00AM – 9:30AM

Open Seats Program

- District Participation
- SAT Prep Course
- Transition to College Course
- Open Seats Second Semester
- Open Seats 2011-2012

9:30AM – 10:00AM

Dual Enrollment Program

- RCI Dual Enrollment Balance Sheet
- Equal/Open Access \$10,000

10:00AM – 10:30AM

Cyber/Technology Program

- Online Curriculum and Supplies
- Online Teacher Training

10:30AM – 11:00AM

Academy for Success/Choice Academies

- Academy for Success

VPSCG – Regional Choice Initiative

Principals Meeting Background

January 5, 2011

Prepared by: Marianne LeDonne, RCI Director

RCI – Open Seats Program

- One student left the Full-time Transfer program while an additional student will be taking a semester class starting this January. Our total stands at ninety students.
- Five schools will be offering the SAT Prep course to their students this school year. We could run the course for two additional schools to begin January 25 in preparation for the March exam. Three classes could be reserved by schools for the May exam. Please contact Marsha if your school is interested in hosting any of the five that are available.
- Ambridge, Big Beaver Falls, and New Brighton will be hosting the Transition to College course at their high schools beginning this second semester. If you are interested in hosting this course, please contact Marsha. There are funds available to run one additional site.
- There is over \$200,000 still available for students to be funded in the Open Seats Program for the current school year. If you are hosting an Academy for Success, students would be funded to attend your school through the Open Seats Program. If you have second semester courses with empty seats, please let us know what is available so the RCI Office can announce this to all schools on your behalf. Low Performing/Disengaged students in your district may be motivated to stay in school if given the Open Seat option.
- This month is an opportune time for districts to look at their course needs and offerings for the 2011-2012 school year. The Big Beaver Falls school district is looking ahead for Foreign Language classes. What will your district be offering; what are your needs?

RCI- Dual Enrollment Program

- We have enclosed you district's RCI Dual Enrollment Balance Sheet. The totals reflect the invoices that were reconciled on behalf of your district for the first semester. Your guidance counselors have these current balance sheets, as well. Please contact Marsha if you have any questions or concerns.

- There are additional funds for districts that run in-house Dual Enrollment courses. To satisfy any equal/open access issues, those districts that run two consecutive courses in-house are eligible for an additional \$10,000 for those students who do not choose to take the in-house courses. This is for a Low Performing/Disengaged student to choose a single course.

RCI – Cyber/Technology Program

- All districts have a complete online curriculum, with electives, for students in grades 7-12 from which to choose.
- As with the first group of courses we purchased, there are supplies that must be provided to the teacher and/or student. We have been fortunate in that Marisa has found free versions of any/all software needed for the courses. We will provide the list with the free versions as soon as possible. In the event a cost may be attached, we will continue to work to find a solution that is cost-free.
- Marisa and Chris Davis from Robert Morris will be conducting a training for online teaching in February. Please let the RCI office know if you have teachers interested in teaching online in your district.

RCI - Choice Academies/Academy for Success Program

- Are you interested in hosting an Academy for Success this second semester? Next year? Please call the RCI office to make arrangements to qualify your school/grade under this program.

Districts Participating in 2010-2011 Open Seats

Student	Going to..	Course	Method
Aliquippa- 2 Students			
2 Students	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
Ambridge 2 Students			
1 Student	Freedom	<u>Full Day Academic Transfer to Freedom</u>	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Point Park Academy	<u>½ day Academic</u>	Physical Transfer
Beaver- 2 Students			
1 Student	Western Beaver	<u>Full Day Academic Transfer to Western Beaver</u>	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Blackhawk	A P Economics	Physical Transfer
Blackhawk- 13 Students			
12 Students	2 Sections	Mandarin Chinese I & II	IVC
1 Student	Ambridge	<u>Full Day Academic</u>	Physical Transfer
Central Valley- 1 Student			
1 Student	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
Ellwood City-1 Student			
1 Student	Riverside	Philosophy	IVC
Freedom-10 Students			
3 Students	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Ambridge	Accounting	Physical Transfer
2 Students	Ambridge	German II	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Beaver Falls	French III	IVC

Districts Participating in 2010-2011 Open Seats

Student	Going to..	Course	Method
Freedom continued....			
1 Student	Western Beaver	Marine Science	Online /Hybrid
1 Student	Blackhawk	French II	IVC
1 Student	Ambridge Jr High	<u>Full Day Academic</u>	Physical Transfer
Hopewell- 12 Students			
6 Students	Ambridge	ROTC 2 Sections	Physical Transfer
6 Students	New Brighton	Japanese I	IVC
New Brighton- 16 Students			
5 Students	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Beaver	ROTC	Physical Transfer
7 Students	Rochester	German I	IVC
1 Student	Rochester	German III	IVC
1 Student	Blackhawk	Latin I	IVC
1 Student	Blackhawk	Latin II	IVC
Riverside- 4 Students			
1 Student	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
2 Students	New Brighton	Japanese	IVC
1 Student	Ellwood City	Health	Physical Transfer
Rochester- 3 Students			
1 Student	Freedom	<u>Full Day Academic</u> Transfer to Freedom	Physical Transfer
1 Student	Beaver	ROTC	Physical Transfer

Districts Participating in 2010-2011 Open Seats

Student	Going to..	Course	Method
Rochester Continued...			
1 Student	Ambridge	ROTC	Physical Transfer
Western Beaver- 24 Students			
9 Students	2 Sections	Mandarin Chinese I & II	IVC
7 Students	Riverside	Sports & Management	IVC
7 Students	Riverside	Sports History	IVC
1 Students	Beaver	ROTC	Physical Transfer
Total Students Participating 90			
Full Time Transfers 5		Video Conference 57	Physical Transfer 33

1/3/2011



a private school or a public school in a school district other than where they reside."

Ultimately, the scholarships would extend to all low-income students, Piccola said, but initially it would apply only to those attending the lowest-performing 5 percent of public schools. The bill would also create an opportunity scholarship program for private schools and moderately expand the current Education Improvement Tax Credit given to corporations that create educational scholarships which facilitate the ability of students to attend a school of their choice, he said.

The Education Improvement Tax Credit was created in 2001 under the Gov. Tom Ridge administration - the last time there was wide political support for voucher programs.

While advocates for voucher programs claim that they benefit public education and reduce its cost by creating more competition among schools, not everyone is convinced.

The Pennsylvania School Board Association and Pennsylvania State Education Association, representing teachers' unions, oppose voucher programs because they take away public-school funding.

David Salter, director of public relations for PSBA, said he was reluctant to talk specifics about vouchers and charter-school reform until Piccola's bill has been introduced. However, in general, he said, he believes voucher programs siphon dollars away from the public-school system and don't show any better results.

"If we look at other states and cities with voucher programs, like Milwaukee and Cleveland, all the research to date shows these students do not perform any better than public-school peers," Salter

said. "If that is the case, than what reason is there to go forward with this?"

Salter said poll data suggest most residents of the state do not favor using taxpayer money to fund private schools. He added that the association's lobbyists will be working with legislators to get its views heard.

"Our government-relations folks will be fully energized, and this will be on top of our agenda," he said.

But Piccola said he believes there is wide support for voucher programs and more school choice options because the accountability in the No Child Left Behind regulations has exposed failing schools to parents.

"Parents are much more savvy to the education that their child is - or is not - receiving, which makes it easier to drum up support for a voucher plan," Piccola said. "In addition to the research, the public-education system in Pennsylvania has deteriorated significantly since the 1990s. Throwing more money at our schools is not the answer. ... With a new administration and a Republican-controlled Senate and House of Representatives, I am hopeful this issue will be a legislative priority beginning in 2011."

johnlatimer@ldnews.com; 272-5611, ext. 149

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